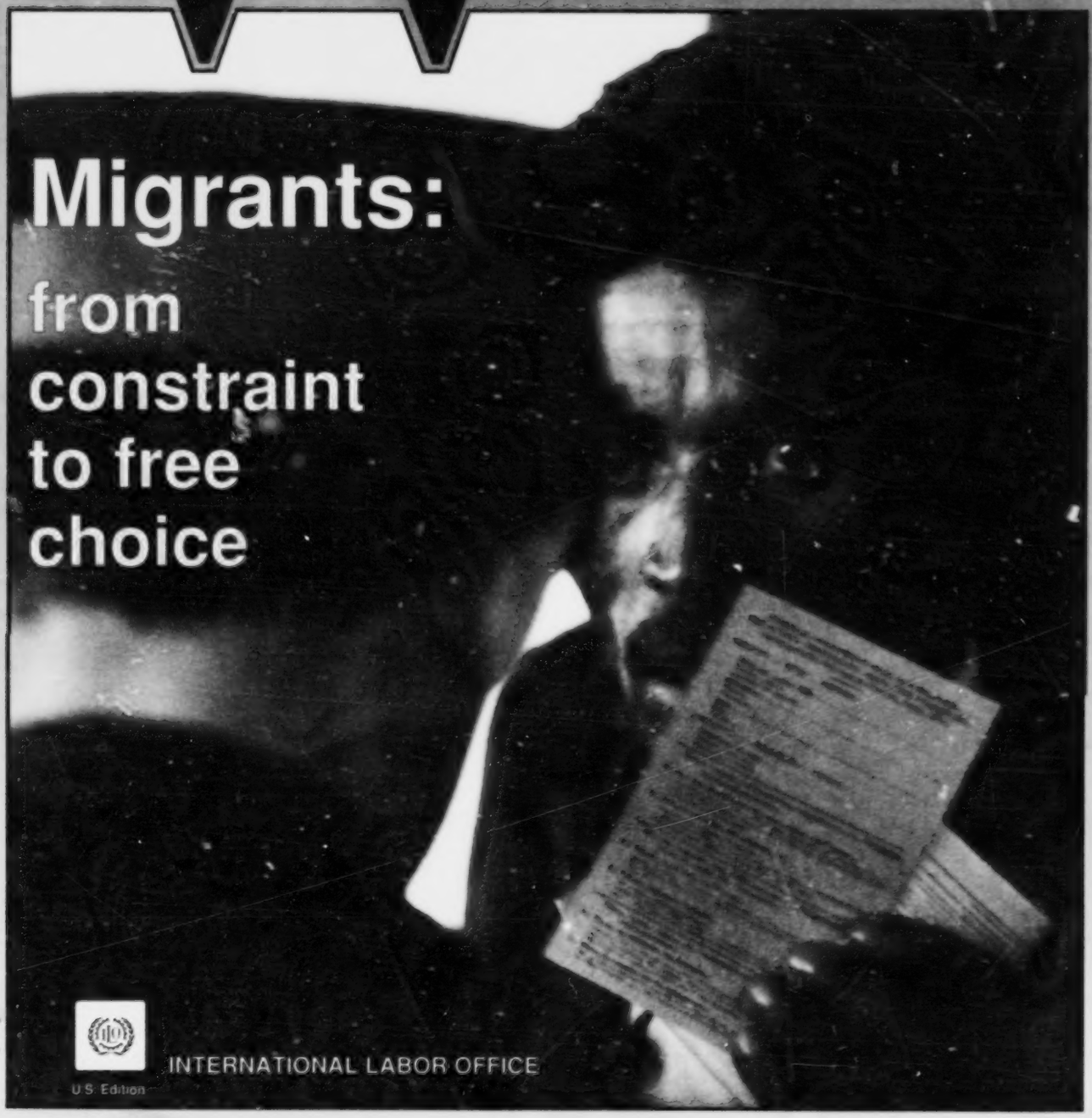
World of Work

THE MAGAZINE OF THE ILO



Migrants: from constraint to free choice

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Editorial

Constraint or free choice

Today more than ever, development is the cause of the imbalances which result in migration. Progress in less-developed societies is too slow to satisfy people's employment and income expectations, the result is a heavy flow of emigration to the cities and to foreign countries.

At the other extreme, in the traditional industrialized countries, in the newly industrialized countries of Asia, and in the Arab oil-exporting countries, development has given rise to so great a number and so wide a diversity of jobs that it is now hard to imagine just how economies could function without migrant labor. Quite obviously the continuation of high standards of living in these countries will depend, to a large extent, on the active presence of foreign workers.

Yet, at the global level something isn't quite working out. The number of workers who want to go abroad is greater than the entry levels fixed by host countries. As a result, there is increasing temptation to emigrate and work illegally, with all the risks of exploitation that this involves. And even for legal immigrants things are not so simple. In their countries of employment they frequently fall victim to discrimination in actual fact, even if not in law. They have problems finding housing, reuniting with families, actually collecting retirement pensions, and so on.

Jean Mohr

The ILO, which has been concerned with these questions ever since its beginnings, has adopted a number of Conventions (Nos. 97, 118, 143 and 157) aimed at protecting migrant workers and their families. These Conventions are not as widely applied as they should be, and the Office will be increasing its efforts in 1994-95 in the area of protection of migrants.

While carrying out its duty to protect workers, the international community must also consider how applicants for migration can finally move from situations of constraint to situations of free choice. Efforts should be made to hasten the development of poor countries so that their workers have sufficient reason to stay at home rather than try their luck elsewhere.

The ILO makes a significant move in this direction during this present month of April by launching the Maghreb Program: representatives of European immigrant host countries and of the countries of origin are invited to meet in order to define a common strategy for creating employment and income. Should the experiment prove fruitful – as indeed I am sure it will – the ILO will then try to promote the idea of joint consultation in other areas of extensive migration such as Eastern Europe and South-East Asia.

Michel Hansenne
Director-General

READEX
FICHE

Millions of workers on the move

Peter Stalker*

To leave one's homeland and sail away to make a new start in a foreign country.... Throughout human history, and throughout the world, men and women have had to reconcile themselves to migration. A quick glance at the map serves to illustrate the remarkable extent and importance of migration today. Legal or illegal, temporary, seasonal or permanent, migration for employment is one of the dominant features of the world of work.

Peruvian laborers in Japan, Russian scientists in Israel, Sri Lankan housemaids in Singapore. Around 70 million people now work or live in foreign countries. Added to these are 12 million refugees, driven from their homelands by natural disaster or military conflict. And the numbers are rising steadily: one million people emigrate permanently each year, while another million seek political asylum.

Most migrant workers are driven abroad by low wages and unemployment, or simply attracted by better opportunities elsewhere. One or two people at first, but then others follow from the same community, establishing complex chains of migration linking poor countries to rich: Brazil to Japan, Turkey to Germany, Iran to Sweden.

Since the mid 1970s many industrial countries have cut down drastically on immigration. Nowadays most legal

A QUICK LOOK AT FIGURES

Official departures and admissions of migrant workers, 1980-1990: some examples

Departures from

✔ *Bangladesh*	*759,100*
✔ *Philippines* (*of which sailors 18%*)	*4,554,100*
✔ *Turkey*	*506,300*

Admissions in

✔ *Austria*	*405,900*
✔ *Canada**	*646,400*

*permanent economic settlers

Algerian immigrants to France, for example, or Pakistanis coming to the United Kingdom, arrive through family reunification programs. Many people are still welcome as workers, but in countries like Canada and Australia they need to demonstrate even higher levels of skill if they are to carry the technical baggage that will qualify them for entry – a brain gain for the receiving country but an expensive brain drain for the sender.

Illegal entry

The unskilled will often try to enter illegally, slipping across borders by night. An estimated one million Mexicans were caught by U.S. border patrols in 1992. Others come in on temporary visas and melt into the underground labor market. Around 300,000 "tourists" from Bangladesh, the Philippines and dozens of other countries were living illegally in Japan in 1992, a 70 per cent increase over the previous year.

The globalization of international capital means that many more workers are being transferred from one subsidiary of a transnational corporation to another. The number of such transfers into the United States doubled during the 1980s.

By no means all international migration is from developing to industrialized countries. Migration from Eastern Europe to Western Europe may not have reached the dramatic levels sometimes predicted, but it seems likely to increase substantially in future years. And there are also significant transfers between developing countries: Colombians to Venezuela, Malians to Cote d'Ivoire. And many countries, like Malaysia and Nigeria, are both senders and receivers of migrants.

Migration for some workers is a short-term expedient: a two-year contract in the Gulf to save the money for a new house or to buy some land. Others travel seasonally, like the Poles streaming down the autobahns to pick fruit in Germany or France. But millions have also set their sights on permanent residence, maybe even citizenship, in a new country.

The receiving countries say they want fewer immigrants, but whether this will substantially reduce the numbers is doubtful, particularly where borders are "porous". First, because there are still plenty of the dirty, dangerous and difficult jobs which only immigrants are prepared to do. And second, because the numbers seeking work will continue to grow: 38 million people are added to the labor force in developing countries each year, joining the 700 million or so already unemployed.

From skilled engineers and high-level managers to bricklayers and housemaids, the increased complexity of international production – and the pressure of poverty – are likely to disperse workers of every kind around the globe for many years to come. ⌟

*Economist, specialist in problems of development.

IMMIGRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

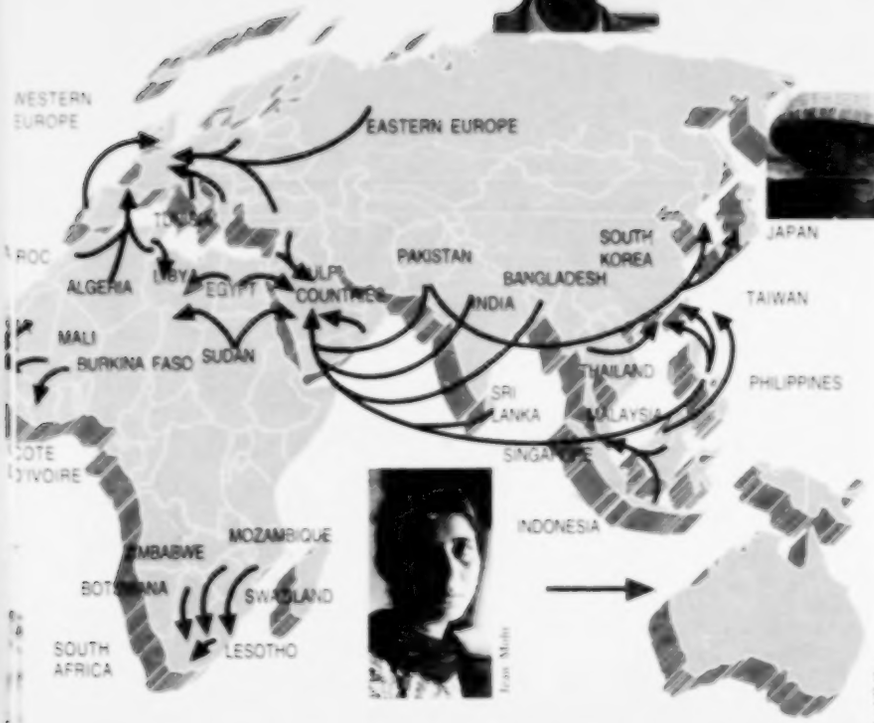
Racial, ethnic and cultural diversity is constantly increasing in the US. In 1991, no less than 1,828,167 new immigrants obtained permanent residence status, a new record. A new immigration law enacted in 1990 increased the number of immigrants allowed entry each year – legislation that will have a great impact on the labor force.

According to the Service of Immigration and Naturalization, Mexico had a clear lead over other countries of origin in 1991 with 946,167 persons admitted. This was followed by the Philippines (63,596), the former USSR (56,980), Vietnam (55,307) and Haiti (47,527).

The regional breakdown of immigration to the US was as follows: North America: 1,210,981; Asia: 358,533; Europe: 135,234; Central America: 111,093; South America: 79,934; Africa: 36,179; and Oceania: 6,236.

The new Immigration Act adopted in 1990 increased the annual admission quota; this will also have considerable repercussion on the composition of the workforce.

And the status of immigrants in the U.S. labor force? The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that "recent immigrants earn less and have higher jobless rates than earlier postwar immigrants and U.S. natives; educational attainment and English fluency are important factors in labor market success".



Jean Mohr

Photos: J. Maillard (ILO)

Map from *Migration*, published by the International Migration for Employment Branch, ILO, Geneva.

Migrants working and living in Europe today

Wolf-Rudiger Bohning*

Despite the current freeze on hiring, there are still as many migrant workers in Europe as there were 20 years ago. Employment remains their best means of escaping poverty and adapting to European societies. Unfortunately, many now find themselves with inadequate training and cannot acquire the new qualifications demanded by the evolution of technology.

Millions of Algerians, Italians, Moroccans, Portuguese, Turks and others were eagerly recruited in the 1950s and 1960s to turn the wheels of German industry, to man French construction sites, to staff Swiss hotels, and so on.

The rise in oil prices since 1973 put an end to active recruitment, though family reunification continued and brought with it wives and children who were, of course, potential labor market entrants. The economies of the EC and EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries shed much of the low-skill labor- intensive production in manufacturing and construction while opening up new employment opportunities in the service sector.

Migrant workers were greatly affected by these trends. Some return migration and much unemployment occurred. But there are almost as many migrant workers today as there were 20 years ago. And German industrialists, French construction managers and Swiss hoteliers can frequently be overheard saying that non-national workers are an integral part of the labor market – they couldn't do without them.

Problems of adaptation

In the 12 member countries of the EC and those five of the EFTA countries that have just linked up to form one European Economic Area (EEA), there are over six million migrants at work and another 750,000 unemployed. Thousands are too discouraged to register with public employment services, and thousands of others eke out a meager existence through irregular work. In total, there are perhaps 15 million legally residing non-nationals in the EEA at present, including refugees, and over one million in Switzerland, plus countless illegals throughout Europe.

While there are many success stories, even millionaires, among Western Europe's migrants, there have been innumerable cases of poverty and destitution and, of late, a feeling of gloom mirroring the rise of xenophobia or hatred of foreigners among portions of the European electorate.

Gloom

The gloom also derives from the realization that every downturn of the economy throws a disproportionate number of migrants out of work, and every upturn requires more or new skills to get a job, skills that the older generation finds very difficult to pick up

TRADE UNIONS COMBAT ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION

"The aim is to obtain rules which favor the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities into European society by combating racism, xenophobia (hatred of foreigners) and increasing discrimination," Ms. Maria Elena André, General Secretary of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) stated, in reply to a question from *World of Work*.

She went on to point out that in 1993 Europe had about eight million inhabitants, including some 3.5 million workers who could not travel freely. In the view of the ETUC, "migrant workers legally residing in the Community should be exempt from visa requirements normally applicable to citizens of their countries of origin. That freedom of movement should give them the right, after a predetermined period of residence in a member State, to seek employment in another member State, also for a predetermined period."

But Ms. André felt that, more generally, real integration policies needed to be implemented, guaranteeing among other things, "equality of access to education, vocational training, the labor market, social security and decent housing".

Trade unions in both countries of employment and countries of origin are called upon to step up cooperation on migration and to play a more active role in their respective countries. In order to foster a better knowledge of the international legal framework, the ILO in December 1992 held a first subregional seminar in Tunis on ILO Standards and Migrants. It was attended by trade union leaders from eight African and Maghreb countries and by representatives of the ETUC, the ICFTU and various European countries.

because it was insufficiently schooled or trained to cope with the rapidly changing demands of highly advanced industries.

European governments and employers have generally poured much public money into language training for migrants. Support for vocational training has also been pronounced in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden, but it was understandably aimed chiefly at the youngsters who grew up in their parents' country of employment. It was economically more promising to concentrate scarce resources on them rather than on their parents; and it was socially more pressing to integrate the restless youngsters into the labor market than to bother very much about their parents.

Employment

Employment is the crux of integration. While unemployment benefits are generally high and correspond relatively well to the requirements of a nuclear family that enjoys acceptable housing and whose children face no particular language or cultural problems at school, foreign families tend to have more children, to start out in the worst part of the housing market, to attend the least promising schools and to have difficulties in making ends meet with the unemployment benefits or social support payments due to them. Breaking out of the vicious circle of poverty breeding poverty is possible only through long, uninterrupted periods of remunerative employment. It happens, thankfully, but it does not happen on anything like the scale necessary to demarginalize the migrant populations, especially those who come from outside the European Economic Area.

Employers may not be able to do without foreigners. But they need fewer of them today than yesterday. And they need more skilled ones. Are European governments rising to the challenge of making full use of the human resource potential embodied in the migrant population? Or will the competitive pressures force them to look for skilled workers and professionals in parts of the world that can least afford to lose them? ⌟

**Chief of the International Migration for Employment Branch of the ILO.*

Jacques Maillard

HELPING SELF-EMPLOYED TURKS AND THEIR APPRENTICES IN GERMANY

In the mid-1980s Turkish migrant workers and second-generation migrants suffered from high unemployment. Thousands of workers tried to set themselves up on their own account, often going bankrupt within a short period of time for lack of experience. They frequently used young Turkish workers around the shop or in the office, but these were usually back on the streets after a few weeks of work.

The ILO set up a pilot project to advise the self-employed on how to improve in business, and trained them so that they, in turn, could train youngsters as apprentices according to German rules. The project was co-financed by the German federal or Länder (state) governments and the European Social Fund.

Forty-five enterprises and twice as many apprentices (including nine Germans) benefitted from the project. It demonstrated that the motivation of the self-employed and the apprentice's realization that a modern society requires extensive training to get on, can overcome enormous handicaps and pessimism.

The attraction of the Gulf

In the six countries of the Gulf foreign workers outnumber national workers by far. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, nine workers of every ten are immigrants. The 1991 crisis, which hit these foreign workers particularly hard, also shifted ratios and policies. But the need for foreign labor is still considerable.

The Arab world has become one of the key regions for international migration for employment. It includes a number of emigration countries, most of which are suffering a population explosion and have few oil resources, as well as immigration countries which are major oil producers but have small domestic populations. The latter group specifically includes the six Gulf countries which, after the oil boom of the 1970s, became one of the world's major centers of immigration.

In 1990, foreigners in the six Gulf countries accounted for 63.2 per cent of the total workforce. In the United Arab Emirates, the figure is as high as 91 per cent, gradually lowering to 81 per cent in Qatar, 79 per cent in Kuwait, 61 per cent in Oman, 55 per cent in Saudi Arabia and 53 per cent in Bahrain. The origins of the immigrants have become more diverse as foreign labor requirements increase. Immigration from Asia has progressively followed upon and, in some cases replaced, Arab labor. Continuing flows of migrants, even in a period of economic depression, as was the case in the mid-1980s, bear witness to the degree of dependence of various economic sectors on foreign labor.

While the oil boom created vast population movements, the Gulf Crisis again changed patterns of migration in the region. Some two million people packed their bags and made for home under particularly dramatic conditions. Some 94 per cent of the foreign population of Kuwait left the country and nearly half a million workers – mainly Egyptians – moved out of Iraq. Originally limited to these two countries, the exodus spread to Saudi Arabia, which put an end to the privileged status of about 700,000 Yemenis, and, to a lesser degree, affected other Gulf States.

The end of the Crisis and the reconstruction of Kuwait again triggered migration in what appears to be a different context. Although all the Gulf countries are still heavily dependent on foreign labor, recent developments show significant changes in migration policies. The emphasis is to be placed increasingly on diversifying the origins of the migrants. This trend should, over the short term at least, result in a considerable strengthening of the Asian labor force and a reduction in non-native Arabs. Moreover, the desire to increase the level of participation of nationals in the economic life of the Gulf States is becoming ever more apparent. This new approach seems to be catering to a concern about safeguarding the demographic, social and cultural balance within each country, while also solving the problem of rising unemployment among nationals.

However, these changes cause no great difference in the outlook for migration to the region. The Gulf States will continue to be an area of heavy international immigration for workers in search of employment.

The origin of the foreign labor force, its composition and working and living conditions, will vary with the needs of the moment and be influenced more heavily by political factors and economic necessities. In all these countries, the protection of migrant workers, whose precarious situation became quite apparent during the Gulf Crisis, will be of major concern to both the states of the regions and to the ILO.

R. D. ⌟

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Iraq invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990. According to the Sri Lanka Ministry of Labor, there were more than 96,000 expatriate Sri Lankan workers in Kuwait and Iraq. A large percentage of these workers were employed in oil-rich Kuwait and a very small number in Iraq.

Some 70 to 80 per cent were women between 20 and 45 years of age. Nearly all of them were employed as housemaids in Kuwait. Most were from the poorest level of society and were heavily indebted in order to pay for hiring agents' fees and airline tickets. Heavy indebtedness and mortgaging of house and land are common. Some 15 per cent had worked abroad for less than one year when they were forced to return. They simply had

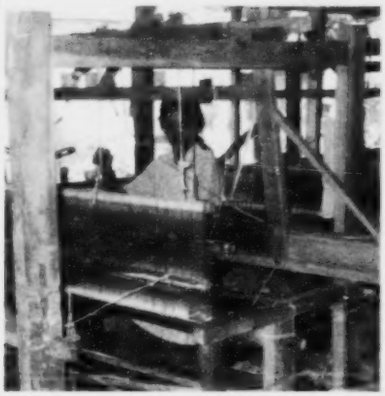
THE ROLI

The ILO/UNDP (United Nations Development Program) project to aid some 80,000 Sri Lankan migrant workers who fled Kuwait and the Gulf Region during the Iraqi occupation of 1990 emphasized, in particular, registration of the returnees, counseling, and training.

As a result of the registration, Sri Lanka is well ahead of other countries

Some trainees remain in Sri Lanka to make their living. Yet most want to return to work in the Gulf Region, in spite of all – "at the sweet mercy of the sponsor".

Rodger Goodson



Jacques Maillard

anka to Kuwait and back: risis of domestic workers

not saved enough money to pay their debts.

Some Middle East employers customarily pay workers in one lump sum when they return to Sri Lanka. Others, unscrupulous, had not paid them any wages at all. The Sri Lankans themselves are reported to tend to accumulate their salaries to avoid bank or other charges and bring back a large sum on their return. Others had made extensive purchases of clothes, jewelry and electronic equipment. Most of these workers lost everything during the Gulf Crisis, in one way or another.

In addition to these material and financial losses, Sri Lankan women workers suffered tremendous emotional and psychological stress.

Exploitation

Between 1981 and 1987, 80 per cent of all reported complaints to the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment concerned female domestic workers in the Middle East. Sexual harassment by the male head of household was among the three most common complaints. Often this is hard to detect and to prove because many women do not report sexual harassment for reasons of shame and loss of reputation. Other complaints concern non-payment of agreed wages, poor housing, no medical attention at all, and far too heavy workloads (most women work from 12 to 15 hours per day). The highest incidences are reported from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the Lebanon. But there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the same abuses exist in other Middle East countries.

Migrant women in the Middle East are subject to harsh working and living conditions. They are particularly prey to exploitation, because they are not protected by laws or specific provisions. As an official of the Sri Lanka Bureau of Foreign Employment puts it, Sri Lankan women, who are docile, who come cheap, and who have relatively high literacy rates, are almost always "at the sweet mercy of the sponsor".

R. G.

E OF THE ILO

and is now in a position to process compensation rapidly once it becomes available. Trauma counseling especially has been quite successful; but counseling to help returnees find alternatives to work in Sri Lanka instead of migrating has been problematic at best.

The training components include training for the garment industry, training of housemaids, and higher-skills upgrading.

"THERE IS NO OTHER SOLUTION"

At the Kegalla District Training Center, some two hours from Colombo, the reporter from *World of Work* met with a group of eighty young Sri Lankan trainees – largely women – who had been forced to leave the Gulf Region when the Crisis occurred. At the time of the meeting three-fourths of them intended to return to work in Kuwait or elsewhere in the Gulf Region when their training or re-training period was over, in spite of all. Why? A few of many stories.

A young woman: *I have a house, a mortgage and many debts. I was there for only three months before I was forced to leave because of the War. Under present economic circumstances in Sri Lanka, working in the Gulf is the only way I can hope to make enough money to pay off my debts.*

A young man: *I was out there for 15 months. I have paid the agent's fees. Now I have to get back to work, in order to make a living.*

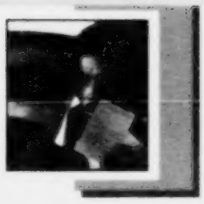
Another young woman: *I had land and a mortgage. The War forced me to come back and I lost everything. I must return now to regain what I have lost.*

An older woman: *I lost my husband. I have two children who are studying. I have no choice but to earn the money.*

Another young woman: *After ten years of schooling, there is still no job for me here in Sri Lanka. Migrating to the Gulf is one way I can be sure to find work and earn a living.*

Another young woman begins by crying as she stands before the group: *I was in Kuwait for six months with my two sisters. I have debts of 14,000 rupees. All three of us returned, but we are still trying to pay the mortgage. I went to work in Saudi Arabia for six months in 1991 and returned because it is not a good place to work. I had to borrow money again. Now I must return to work in the Gulf. I have two children, my husband is a casual laborer, we are trying to build a house. There is no other solution.*

(Interviews by Rodger Goodson)



Alternatives to migration

Jacques Maillard

Migration can mean progress and revitalized economies, but can also prove damaging to the country of the workers' origin and the host country alike if it gets out of hand. It is clearly in the interests of both countries and of potential emigrants that alternative solutions be developed, so that those concerned have a real choice. Interview with Mr. Raouf Daboussi, an ILO official in charge of the Migration for Employment Unit of the Migration and Population Branch.

"Emigration has been going on since the world began and, wherever it has taken place, it has resulted in progress and dynamic economies. It would be absurd - indeed impossible – to try to put an end to it."

From the very outset, Raouf Daboussi wants to stress the true value of trans-border labor movements. At the same time, he admits that such movements also bring to light important differences in standards of living and employment opportunities between neighboring geographical regions, which can in turn result in hopeless situations for workers and abuses of their rights.

"We do not have to go very far back in history to realize that after the Second World War, migration for employment, strongly encouraged by the Northern countries, resulted in the unprecedented economic development of those countries. Even today, in the EC countries free movement of workers is highly encouraged within the Single Market. And countries such as the U.S. (despite certain restrictions), Australia and Canada continue to take in foreign labor, not to speak of the Gulf countries, which have been a major area of migration for employment since the 1960s."

Constant demand

The current trend, especially in Western European countries, to cut down or even prohibit the arrival and settlement of workers from less developed countries, is due above all to increasing unemployment, Mr. Daboussi contends. "This has given rise to social or political tendencies that have been able to play on the phenomenon of migration, using it as a sort of national political argument. But there are certain sectors of the economy that continue to need foreign labor, such as the building trade, the textile industry and agriculture. The fact that clandestine immigration continues proves that the need persists."

THE MAGHREB PROGRAM

Financed by Italy, this ILO program is a result of the joint ILO/UNHCR meeting of May 1992. The aim is to establish a strategy for the utilization of international aid in the Maghreb region in collaboration with certain European countries. As part of this strategy, the partners will attempt to develop and promote employment policies and income generation for needy regions or target groups in order to lessen the pressure to migrate.

A regional workshop bringing together countries from the Maghreb and Europe as well as regional or international organizations active in the area will be held from 19 to 22 April at the ILO Turin Center to define a common approach. This meeting will be followed by national meetings in each of the three countries of the Maghreb to establish short and medium-term action plans or financing through mobilization of national resources and international aid.

If the results are satisfactory, this experiment in co-operation can be employed in other regions of the world.

The same caution and discretion is called for in analyzing the situation and attitudes in the countries from which the immigrants originate.

"On the one hand, migration has always provided – and still does – a short-term solution to the problems of poverty and unemployment. It also helps to fill national coffers and contributes to the balance of payments. In Yemen, for example, money sent home by workers is equivalent to up to one and a half times the export income of the country. At the same time, the changes that have completely altered society in these countries of origin need highlighting for, while emigration in the 1950s or 1960s involved the illiterate and unskilled, it now involves people with a higher level of education who can find no job opportunities at home. This is a matter of concern for governments, which see valuable human resources draining away. By way of example, one might mention the 6,000 senior managers who have emigrated from the Arab region to the US over the past 20 years."

Converging interests

Mr. Daboussi finds that, in a way, the interests of the countries of emigration coincide with the attitude or policy of many countries of immigration. "The Northern countries no longer want massive and uncontrolled immigration, while the countries of the South would, in so far as possible, like to develop domestic policies which might offer their people alternatives by creating jobs and sources of income at home."

It was from this standpoint that the ILO and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) held a joint meeting last year to consider how public development aid could, in future, contribute to easing migratory pressures. To put it succinctly, it is a question of whether, by better applying this aid, potential emigrants can be given a choice between staying at home or leaving, without that choice being influenced by economic or social difficulties.

Participants realized that development aid was, in any case, too meager to provide an overall solution to these problems, but they did think that it might act as a catalyst.

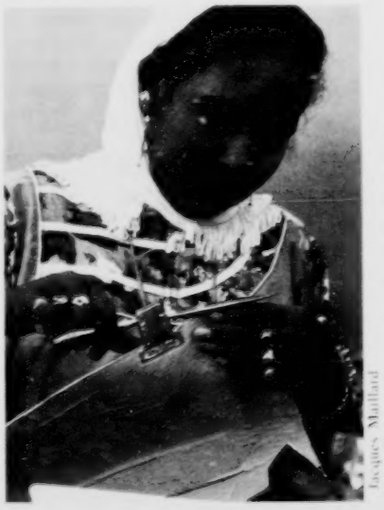
Should development aid serve macroeconomic ends or be directed more towards regions under migratory pressure or certain communities or sectors? "The answer differs from one country to the next," explains Mr. Daboussi, "there is no panacea; but we have noticed that Tunisia, for example, has favored policies aimed at opening up certain abandoned regions while Algeria has adopted a centralized policy by sectors, hoping for a trickle-down effect."

Even though the ILO-HCR meeting did not make formal recommendations, it did open the way for thought and action. The ILO, for example, has now decided to launch the "Maghreb Project" *(see box)*.

Partnership

"The idea", Mr. Daboussi points out, "is to develop a concerted procedure approved by both partners – the European countries and the Maghreb countries. The political will shown on both sides offers hope that the means will be found to make this program a success. A number of proposals were even made that a free-trade zone be established between the two groups of countries. This means that the Europeans have a positive view of the contribution the countries across the Mediterranean can make to their economies and are willing to integrate them further."

"The same procedure may be adopted – and indeed is being adopted – in other regions, countries or continents. Just consider the agreements between the US and Mexico, the bonds between the Gulf countries and other countries of the Arab region, the Japanese involvement with its neighbors, the groundwork being laid between Western and Eastern Europe."



Jacques Maillard

To limit the migration of their workers, countries of the South should attempt to create jobs in agriculture as well as in industry and services.

JAPANESE EMPLOYERS

The Japan Federation of Employers' Associations (NIKKEIREN) takes this position:

"Regarding foreign workers, the prime consideration should not be the domestic labor shortage. Instead, the issue should be approached from the perspective of international co-operation, in order to support independent economic development in the countries involved. Although both the foreign workers and the labor-starved domestic sectors appear to benefit from the arrangement in the short run, over the longer term there are substantial disadvantages to economic development on both sides.

"In order to further international exchange of skills, categories for entry into Japan of highly-trained foreign workers with specialized knowledge should be broadened. On the other hand, entry should continue to be barred to so-called unskilled labor, and the provisions of the revised immigration law to those overstaying or illegally employed should be strictly applied.

"To support independent economic development of the countries concerned, Japan should take positive steps to transfer technology through training at companies in our country. We have emphasized that the transfer of technology in both engineering and software (personnel management, for example) is essential because it nurtures the human resources that could contribute to the economic development of the foreign workers' own countries."

As long as wide variations persist in standards of living, incomes and employment opportunities within any economic group, the pressure to migrate will be strong. It is therefore up to each region to develop partnership policies aimed at reducing wild, uncontrolled migration."

Mr. Daboussi concludes by stressing the need to respect minimum working standards within new migrant groups as they take shape, because such standards are "the only protection against exploitation of man by man" and against any "backsliding" with respect to working conditions and wages or freedom of association. The role of the ILO is to safeguard such basic protection around the world. ⌟

(Interview by Michel Fromont)

International focus on part-time work

At a time when unemployment is reaching high levels in industrialized and developing countries alike and when renewed interest is being shown in work sharing, a world debate on part-time work is about to begin at the ILO. Next June, government, employers' and workers' delegates attending the International Labor Conference will be called on to consider the matter, with a view to the adoption of new international standards in 1994.

A quick glance at the present situation of part-time work, some of the questions raised by this type of work and a look at the proposals placed before the Conference will help clarify discussions.

The facts

● **Part-time work is an important factor in the labor market.** In industrialized market-economy countries, one worker in every four may be involved in part-time work. Part-time workers account for 33 per cent of the total workforce in the Netherlands and 26 per cent in Norway; in Australia, Denmark, New Zealand, the UK and Sweden, they represent more than 20 per cent of total. In Germany, Belgium, Canada, the USA, France and Japan they make up between 10 and 20 per cent of the workforce. Between 1979 and 1990 this share increased almost everywhere except in Greece, Portugal and Sweden. In the Netherlands, part-time work rose from 16 per cent to 33 per cent.

In Central and Eastern Europe, where certain groups of workers such as mothers with young children, the aged or the disabled, were sometimes granted the right to work part time, the current shift to a market economy, longer shop opening hours in towns and the privatization of services, would all indicate that part-time work may be on the increase there as well.

Part-time work in developing countries seems limited. Still, data available for some countries show not only that it exists but that it arouses some interest and registers some increase. In Malaysia, for example, 5 per cent of the enterprises questioned by an ILO survey said that they employed part-time workers. In the public sector, specific regulations on the issue were recently issued in Chile, Egypt and Tunisia. In the Philippines, the number of civil servants working part time increased from 45,000 in 1978 to 55,000 in 1990.

● **This type of work is primarily of interest to women...** In the OECD countries women make up between one-third and nine-tenths of all part-time workers. In 1990 they accounted for 65 per cent of all workers in the United States, Greece and Italy, and about 90 per cent in Germany and Belgium.

● **...and to the services sector:** In the EC in 1989, 17.5 per cent of all workers and 30 per cent of women in the services sector were working part time. The proportion was even higher among married women, reaching 55 per cent in the UK and 75 per cent in the Netherlands. The retail trade, catering and the hotel businesses are the areas where part-time work is most common, followed by banking and insurance.

A few questions

● **Choice or necessity?** Does part-time work respond to the aspirations of the workers concerned to work fewer hours, or is it, as some consider, the only choice open to them, for lack of better ones?

This issue is a complex and difficult

TWO VIEWS OF

Part-time work, though unavoidable, is difficult to understand in all its ramifications because it affects both the activity and the profitability of the enterprise as well as those issues which most concern workers: jobs, working conditions, pay, private and professional life, social protection, and sexual equality.

Employers **tend to place greater stress on the flexibility afforded by part-time work and the advantages of free negotiation between parties. Mr. Roger Decosterd, Swiss employers' delegate to the International Labor Conference, feels that this form of employment, "long viewed with some mistrust by both employers and unions, is now becoming increasingly attractive – and to workers of both sexes. This development is both fortunate and desirable." Among the advantages of part-time work, he points out that "it permits married couples to adjust their working time to fit in with their family duties and their ages. It gives employers a chance to cut costs. It is a convenient way of sharing work to remedy the acute unemployment problem."**

He concludes his comment by saying: "We should be able to help this trend along by taking measures to encourage it rather than adopting regulations to discourage it, and clear the way for social progress with a stimulating Recommendation."

For their part, ***the trade unions*** **have**

Panorama

Part-time work is of special interest to women workers, particularly married women. It is most extensive in retail sales and in the hotel and restaurant business.

one. Surveys conducted among workers in the OECD countries have shown that the proportion of so-called "involuntary" part-time workers is around 50 per cent in Greece and Italy and 25 per cent in Japan, 20 per cent in Australia and the Netherlands and nearly 17.5 per cent in the United States.

A recent opinion poll showed that, in EC countries, 37 per cent of all part-time workers would have preferred to work full time and 61 per cent wanted to continue part-time employment.

● **What protection for part-time workers?** Even though legislation setting out workers' rights normally applies to all, part-time workers often suffer from a number of disadvantages. They are paid less for the same work, while social services and protection are normally designed for full-time workers, and part-time workers are not covered by certain provisions because they do not always attain the minimum working hours or wage levels to qualify.

Working conditions, social security

The report that the ILO has prepared for the Conference notes the importance of such minimum levels for working conditions and social security. In the United Kingdom, Department of Employment statistics based on the United Kingdom's Spring 1988 labor force survey reveal that 55 per cent of all part-time workers were not covered at that time by the main employment rights due to a combination of hours and service requirements.

In addition, workers employed part time tend to be found in low-skill jobs which offer few career prospects. It also frequently happens that they are exposed to uncertainties or strictures when they belong to the company's non-regular staff or they are called upon to work mainly during peak periods.

● **Which measures encourage part-time work?** Some may find that part-time work best suits their needs or preferences. It is, at times, a means of entering or returning to the labor market. It can be a factor of flexibility in the organization of work within enterprises and a means of helping them meet peak demands. And part-time work has enjoyed a renewal of interest not only because of the prospects it offers for entering or staying in the labor market but also for sharing the work available and thus avoiding or reducing unemployment.

Measures to facilitate or encourage part-time work are diverse. Some may be general (dropping administrative and tax barriers, adapting social security systems and labor legislation), while others may aim at specific categories of workers: those with family responsibilities, those who want to combine work with study, and older or handicapped workers.

The text of the proposals

The conclusions submitted to the 80th International Labor Conference[2], drawn up in the light of answers received from governments, employers and workers to a questionnaire prepared by the ILO, suggest that part-time workers be defined as employees who work, on average over a given period of employment, less than the number of hours than would

▶ ▶ ▶

THE PROBLEM

now stopped criticizing part-time work but are still much aware of its disadvantages. Ms. Ruth Dreifuss, Secretary, Confederation of Swiss Trade Unions, and alternate member of the ILO Governing Body (recently elected to the Swiss Federal Council), considers that the whole problem resides in moving on from the present, rather unsatisfactory, situation, to achieving a still far-off hope.

"The present situation is that part-time work is frequently the only way of combining child-rearing, housework and earning a small income. This is the woman's ghetto, that of the least skilled and worst paid. Social security is still tailored to full-time work, and continuous training is reserved for full-time workers. Bluntly speaking, part-time work is the last resort of those up against excessive working hours and unemployment.

"The hope is that part-time work will become a free option permitting men and women to share family, social and professional responsibilities, that it will carry guaranteed and full social protection, and offer equal chances of promotion."

Passing from the present situation to the realization of the hope for the not-too-distant future will, Ruth Dreifuss concludes, "involve the abolition of discrimination against those working part time. This is a goal to be sought in each country...and through an ILO Convention".

constitute, for the relevant type of work or occupation, the normal weekly working hours of full-time workers in the same company or sector.

The conclusions propose adopting a Convention and a Recommendation. The Convention would establish basic principles to protect the workers concerned and to encourage this form of work.

Equivalent conditions

The text provides that measures should be taken to identify and eliminate obstacles to the protection of part-time workers as regards the right of association, collective bargaining, occupational safety and health, and employment discrimination measures.

Similarly, measures should be taken to identify and eliminate differences in unit wage rates between part-time workers and other workers performing work of equal value.

Social security schemes will have to be adapted so that part-time workers may enjoy conditions equivalent to those of other workers. Measures will have to be taken to ensure that such conditions also be guaranteed in the fields of maternity protection, termination of employment and annual leave.

The text does allow for a Member to exclude from the application of these measures and from social security schemes, part-time workers whose income or hours of work would be below specified thresholds, under several reservations. First, the thresholds must be sufficiently low not to exclude a significant percentage of part-time workers. Secondly the thresholds applicable would have to be reviewed periodically and, thirdly, the most representative employers' and workers' organizations would have to be consulted whenever minimums were being set or reviewed.

Among the measures to encourage the creation of part-time jobs and to facilitate access to such jobs, the proposed Convention mentions the adaptation of legislation, the implementation of programs to meet the special needs of certain categories of workers and the mobilization of employment services. ⌟

International Labour Conference, 80th session, Report V (1). Part-time work. ISBN 92-2-208504-3.

Ibid. Report V (2). ISBN 92-2-208505-1.

Unemployment increases world wide

The global employment picture has remained depressed over the past 12 months. The industrial market economies are taking a long time to emerge from recession, and overall unemployment has risen yet again. Eastern European countries have seen unemployment rising steeply as they begin to move towards market economies. Africa too has made little progress, struggling to adjust but with few obvious rewards as yet. The picture is somewhat brighter in Latin America where adjustment does seem to have been more effective. But only Asia seems to be producing sustained economic growth and offering significant increases in employment.

This is the hardly encouraging picture of the general situation for world employment presented in the most recent edition of *World Labor Report** recently published by the ILO.

In the OECD countries unemployment averages around 8 per cent; about 33 million people are out of work. Most job losses continue to be in construction as well as manufacturing, where employment in 1991 fell on average by 1.5 per cent. But recently there has been a much greater shakeout of jobs across a wide range of services and white-collar occupations.

In addition to ever-rising unemployment, the 1980s were marked by profound modifications in the structure of employment. Increasingly, women want to work and build careers, but they still have serious difficulty finding jobs; generally speaking, unemployment remains higher for women than for men.

Young workers also encounter higher-than-average employment. In 1991 in Spain, for example, the rate of unemployment was 16 per cent on average but 31 per cent for young people from 16 to 19 years of age. In Italy, average unemployment was 11 per cent but 38 per cent for 14 to 19 year old workers.

Eastern European countries have seen unemployment rise steeply as they move to market economies. Most of the unemployment – around 80 per cent – has come from the shrinking of state enterprises, and here, too, the majority of the job losses occurred in industry, though there were also substantial declines in agriculture and services.

Latin America, says the Report, has made significant economic progress since the mid-1980s. But in 1990, 46 per cent – or 192 million people – lived under the poverty line, 5 per cent higher than at the beginning of the 1980s. Unemployment remains stubbornly high in the urban areas, having stabilized at around 8 per cent. And wages have fallen steeply: between 1980 and 1991 the average industrial wage fell by 17.5 per cent, and the average minimum wage by 35 per cent.

In Sub-Saharan Africa the outlook is still gloomy. Urban unemployment is between 15 and 20 per cent and affects some 14 million people – a total which increases by about 10 per cent per year. Particularly disturbing here, says the Report, is unemployment among the young: people aged between 15 and 24 make up only one-third of the region's labor force, but they are between two-thirds and three-quarters of the unemployed. Most of the new workers move into the informal sector, which now employs over 60 per cent of the urban labor force.

Asia remains the most dynamic region of the developing world, so much so that Newly Industrializing Economies, like the Republic of Korea or Singapore, now face severe labor shortages. And other fast-growing economies like Malaysia and Thailand are also moving in the same direction. Labor shortages in the region are met in part by flows of migrant workers from the labor surplus countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines. The Philippines has unemployment officially estimated at 15 per cent and is now one of the world's major sources of migrant workers, with 2 million people overseas.

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*See *Media Shelf* page.

Working World

TRENDS

● **No to privatization:** in a recent referendum, almost 72 per cent of the Uruguayan electorate voted for the repeal of five articles of the country's privatization law which allowed for the sale of the state telecommunications company, Antel, and the granting of concessions to the private sector for several other public services. This took place only a few weeks after the rejection by parliament of a proposed law to privatize the pension system, which was deemed too expensive for public financing.

● **Cameroon has a new labor code:** no upheavals, but the extension of its application to domestic workers whose situation is governed by certain customs, a strengthening of trade union freedom, regulation of temporary work, authorization for private employment agencies and more precise definitions of redundancy, night work and the role of labor inspectors.

TRADE UNIONS

● **One of the biggest trade union organizations** in the world was founded in Stockholm (Sweden) in January. Created by the merger of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and the International Professional Secretariat of Teaching, International Federation of Free Teachers' Unions now comprises nearly 300 national organizations in 140 countries and represents more than 20 million teachers and other education employees. "The collective voice of teachers will also carry greater weight in the international trade union movement, and therefore within the decision-making bodies of the ILO", said ILO Deputy Director-General David Taylor, who represented the ILO at the constituent congress.

● **The activities of the Union of Trade Unions (UST) in Chad** were suspended by the government, then reinstated at the end of 1992 after a very tough battle. For six months the multiplication of strikes protesting against austerity and the late payment of wages led the government, who considered them to be political, to forbid UST activities, and to suspend the strikes. A two-month general strike followed. The government progressively lifted its ban, then reintegrated the strikers before canceling all the sanctions at the beginning of 1993.

● **The trade union movement of the Republic of Korea** should attempt to show more unity so that collective bargaining, particularly regarding wages, can be shifted from the enterprise level to the national level, according to a report recently published by the ILO's International Institute for Social Studies. Although real salaries have risen noticeably since 1987 – between 7 to 11 per cent each year – the gap between the wages of workers in large companies and those in small and medium-sized enterprises has also increased. A more global level of bargaining, similar to the Japanese *Shunto* (annual collective bargaining), would allow for better understanding of macro-economic factors, the study says.

Len Sirman Photo

● **American workers will now be entitled to 12 weeks of unpaid leave a year to deal with family medical emergencies – births, adoptions or serious illnesses affecting themselves or members of their immediate families – during which period employers would have to maintain insurance coverage. This is the first act of President Clinton concerning labor law. The bill had been vetoed twice by his predecessor. The legislation, which was presented at a special ceremony, is seen to symbolize the new orientation of the country's social policy. Applying to employees of companies with 50 or more workers, the text covers half the nation's workforce. It should be added that in many big companies, collective agreements already include this kind of guarantee.**

INITIATIVES

● **Literacy for more than 10,000 construction workers** in 250 enterprises in 18 Brazilian states: this is the aim for 1993 of the program *Alfabetizar é construir* which was launched two years ago at the initiative of employers' organizations. The rate of illiteracy among the four million construction workers is about 60 per cent; this has serious consequences on the risks of accidents at work, workers' health, and their abilities to benefit from professional training. The courses take place on the worksites at the end of the working day, which is reduced for participants.

● ***Rebondir***, the first magazine for the unemployed, appeared in France in January. Created by previously unemployed journalists, its aim is to give concrete help to people who are out of work in understanding the regulations, organizing their efforts, finding appropriate training, knowing how to deal with such matters as job advertisements, curriculum vitae and interviews. This is without doubt a very useful initiative but the launching of such a magazine is also a symptom of long-lasting and massive unemployment which, for the first time, makes a veritable "market" of the unemployed.

● **Employers' organizations in Germany** are mobilizing against racism and xenophobia. With the chambers of industry and commerce, they have signed a common declaration and launched an information campaign. This step is furthered by initiatives such as the signature with workers' representatives of common appeals which are posted at the worksite, or printing slogans such as "company friendly to foreigners" on company letterhead stationery.

CHANGES

● **A tripartite agreement on enterprises** has been signed in Poland in spite of dissension among trade unions. It is a question of preparing public enterprises for privatization while ensuring that salaried workers are represented on the supervisory committees. In case of bankruptcy, the protection of workers' claims will be ensured by a fund managed by two parties. The agreement intends to increase the freedom of collective bargaining and amend the Labor Code so that Poland will be able to ratify various ILO conventions dealing with workplace safety and health.

● **In South Africa**, domestic and agricultural workers should see an improvement in their working conditions in 1993. An agreement between the Ministry of Labor and the South African Trade Union Congress provides that the law on basic working conditions, from which they were previously excluded, be applied to these categories. Domestic workers should also benefit from laws on industrial relations and compensation for accidents. ⌟

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A hidden wealth of ideas and ability

A vast conglomeration of millions of families whose survival it is barely able to sustain, or a dynamic springboard to lasting economic and social progress? In the continuing controversy between partisans and detractors of the urban informal sector, a recent ILO study reveals unexpected and reassuring proof of rich possibilities to be found there.

A salesman in a department store in Dhaka (Bangladesh) had the idea of manufacturing ball-point pens, which had previously been largely imported. He consulted different machine and die makers in the city about the possibility of making them. Copying and using the trademark of a Chinese brand, he set up his own business.

On complaints from a retailer that the ink did not flow smoothly in them, the entrepreneur devised an ingenious machine which rectified the problem; there were no further complaints from the retailer. Tough competition from other firms was answered by the production of numerous types of ball-point pens, using a variety of trademarks. This allowed the entrepreneur to retain his market share and do still better than his competitors.

This example shows the ingenuity and the ability to adapt of millions of artisans and small entrepreneurs in the informal sector throughout the Third World. These workers – mechanics, woodworkers, tinsmiths, tailors, clothing designers – today constitute between a third and three-fourths of the economically active population of large cities in the developing countries. According to some estimates, there could be as many as 300 million men and women earning a living for themselves and their families in the informal sector.

Risa

Technological evolution

A study* carried out by the ILO in Asia, Latin America and Africa, mainly of artisans specialized in metal manufactures, contradicts the idea that these micro-enterprises have no other hope than mere survival on the outer fringes of the economy. The study shows that in two key areas, technical evolution and capital accumulation, performances in the informal sector open up unexpected and promising perspectives.

Certainly small Third World urban entrepreneurs remain disadvantaged workers because of insufficient training, inadequate worksites, modest capital and, often, limited primary materials as well as outlets. Also, arbitrary taxation and other forms of administrative harassment often give them a feeling of insecurity and make them turn to clandestine activity.

The inequalities and restrictions resulting from government regulations favoring the formal sector can also limit the possibilities of economic growth for small entrepreneurs in the informal sector.

The study gives irrefutable proof of the capacity for technical evolution in the sector: the majority of enterprises, particularly in Asia, acquire machines

Jacques Maillard

STATISTICAL S THE INFOR

"The informal sector may be broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes to the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production, and on a small scale."

This is the definition of the informal sector adopted last January by the 15th International Conference of Labor Statisticians in Geneva. For the first time international standards were drawn up to enable statisticians better to define the various aspects of employment in this sector. For operational purposes,

and equipment which allow them to improve their methods and increase their productivity. In view of the inadequacy or even inexistence of initial financial resources, such acquisitions reveal an increase in capital. In other words, they are a sign that the enterprise is becoming relatively more affluent.

In Bangkok, for example, 56 per cent of the enterprises studied had upgraded their machinery, mainly in order to increase production or introduce new products. Some domains, such as plastics manufacture, had seen an increase in capital of 18 per cent per year, largely as a result of growing demand. In Bangalore (India) the average value of machinery and equipment showed a 63 per cent rise between start-up of the business and the time of the study, whereas labor increased only 42 per cent over the same period.

In Quito (Ecuador), 76 per cent of the workshops recorded a positive capital accumulation rate. In Lima (Peru), although only 28 per cent of the workshops have accumulated capital, 8 per cent have done so at an annual rate of more than 20 per cent.

Another important finding of the ILO survey is that improvement in production techniques depends largely on the existence and support of a capital goods industry. Here India, for example, differs markedly from such countries as Ecuador, Mali or Rwanda. Indian industry supplies small establishments with 95 per cent of capital goods by proposing models which are better suited to their needs and cheaper than imported products.

Reducing costs

Improvements in technology employed by small enterprises come mainly from modern industry. In Bangkok, 55 per cent of the sample enterprises introduced changes in production methods, more than half of which were suggested by customers and subcontractors.

Here, public authorities would seem to be of little help to the informal sector: in Bangkok, information received by the enterprises about machinery and equipment was obtained from government institutions in only 7 per cent of cases; on the other hand, 35 per cent obtained information from the neighboring units and the rest from various other sources. Similar findings were noted in Bangalore.

A serious constraint limiting the acquisition of advanced machinery and equipment is availability of credit. To overcome this constraint, some enterprises in Dhaka have sought a "tenancy" relationship with those who own capital.

In many cases, informal sector businesses seek to minimize the cost of capital goods through their own construction of certain machines or items of equipment and tools. In Dhaka, a third of the enterprises had such machines. Even in Africa, in spite of unfavorable economic and social environments, the creative capacity is very real. One in three artisans in Bamako (Mali) and one in four in Kigali (Rwanda) constructed at least one machine or tool either for the enterprise or for a customer. The support workshops set up under ILO co-operation projects have been a definite stimulus.

The lack of capital is not always the major constraint, however. In Bangkok the entrepreneurs felt that the availability of raw materials was more important than credit.

Of course, the informal sector in Asia, as in Africa and Latin America, is not normally capable of original technological innovations. The cost of research and development is too high in these regions. Technology adaptation is mainly limited to imitation of machines which already exist, usually in local production. The study therefore concludes that research and development exclusively oriented to small and micro-enterprises should be further stimulated.

*Technological capability in the informal sector, edited by Carlos Maldonado and S.V. Sethuraman. ISBN 92-2-106426-89 (in English only; French version in preparation)

SUPPORT WORKSHOPS

With experience of more than ten years of support to the informal sector – particularly organization, training, improvement of working conditions and strengthening production capacity – the ILO has enabled informal sector businesses to innovate in all areas. For example, in many countries artisans have created polyvalent support workshops which hire out equipment to members of their professional association. These workshops, which benefit from the technical support of the ILO, have a unit for conception of new products and preparation of prototypes which can then be manufactured by the artisans. They also have stocks of raw materials, space to exhibit products and documentation to facilitate technological innovation.

TANDARDS FOR MAL SECTOR

the sector would therefore include all informal enterprises of persons working for their own account and enterprises of informal employers which are defined by the size of the enterprise or by virtue of the fact that the enterprise or its employees are not registered.

Domestic statistics systems should be such as to help evaluate the contribution of the informal sector to various aspects of development such as employment creation, production, income generation, human capital formation and the mobilization of financial resources as pointed out in a resolution adopted by the Conference.

Michel Fromont

Jacques Maillard

Schools to combat work hazards in Africa

In the economic and social context of the developing countries – especially in Africa – conditions of work and employment are too often simply neglected. Occupational accidents and illnesses are more and more frequent, resulting in an enormous waste of human and financial resources. In Harare (Zimbabwe) an ILO intergovernmental institution is trying to combat this problem by training efficient labor inspectors.

At least 10 million accidents at work are reported each year in Africa. About 20,000 people lose their lives and a million end up partially or chronically handicapped. Agriculture, mining, transport, construction and manufacturing and chemical industries are among the more dangerous sectors.

In response to the increasing pre-occupation of governments and the social partners with this situation, and in order to establish policies of active prevention, the ILO decided to set up the African Regional Labor Administration Center (ARLAC) in Harare in 1981 for some 20 English-speaking African countries. A similar institution for the French-speaking countries operates in Yaounde (Cameroon).

ARLAC, CRADAT

An African center for labor administration: only one name, but two acronyms and twin establishments, the English-speaking ARLAC (African Regional Labor Administration Center) in Harare and the French-speaking CRADAT (Centre Regional d Administration Africaine du Travail) in Yaounde. ARLAC officially includes 16 participating members but some 20 countries actually benefit from the work; seven countries are members of CRADAT.

These two centers have as their main goals training work administrators from the member countries: labor inspectors, executives in the Ministries and employment services, and so on; distribution of information; and supplying technical advice for the reorganization of national services of labor administration. The centers play a basic role in the social as well as economic development of the African countries.

Mauritius

Although Africa is still largely a rural continent, urban populations are increasing rapidly. Growth of the informal sector in towns and suburbs brings with it extensive safety and health problems. Industrialization programs set up with insufficient precautions can also prove very costly in terms of risks to employees and to the environment.

Mauritius experienced an astonishing economic boom during the 1980s. A policy of attracting foreign capital led to the implantation of some 600 factories in less than ten years.

In their hurry to solve the grievous problems of unemployment, which in 1980 affected almost 25 per cent of the active population, economic and political leaders paid little attention to working conditions and standards of safety and health inside the factories. Nor were environmental hazards sufficiently taken into consideration. Today, large sums are being invested to try to reduce the damage.

"We want to prevent other countries from making the same mistakes," says Mr. Mustapha El Murtada, ARLAC's main technical adviser. "Inspectors from the member countries who come here for training must be able to make all the regulations respected in their own countries, particularly safety and health standards."

To carry out this task efficiently, the men and women trained in Harare must have sound technical knowledge, but also an aptitude for management, and the ability to listen to and communicate with their partners in the field.

As Pravin Sooklall, a young labor inspector from Mauritius, explains: "Formerly, our role was traditionally that of policeman. Today our approach favors contact with the workers and the employers; we try to be mediators...In Mauritius we have considerably reduced the number and gravity of work accidents and environmental hazards by introducing the idea of prevention into new production units."

The informal sector

Ms. Ifoema Mwankwo, labor inspector in Lagos (Nigeria), is especially interested in the informal sector. In this city of 12 million inhabitants, the in-

One of the essential jobs of the labor inspecto and health at the enterprise.

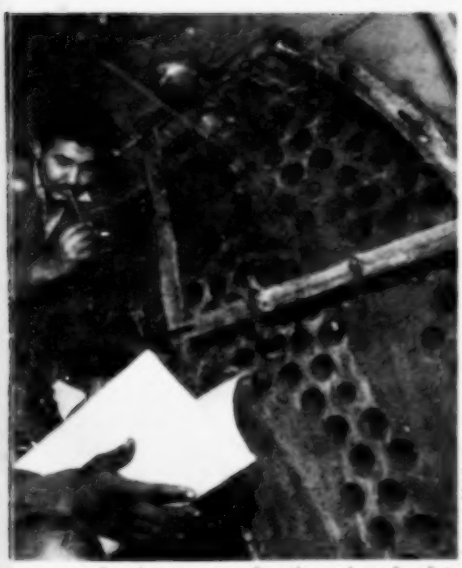
formal sector is one of the most important, because of the number of unregistered itinerant merchants, independent artisans and small illegal factories in the backyards of small entrepreneurs. It is also a sector which has a lot of accidents.

"Imagine a boy of 14 who spends his day selling newspapers at one of the crossroads in Lagos where the emission of carbon dioxide exceeds all limits," the young woman remarks, and adds: "I am here to study the possibilities of eliminating the risks of pollution-linked illness. We must find an appropriate way to approach this category of workers, who have as yet no protection." She hopes that her colleagues from other countries will be able to share their experience and thus find a solution to such problems in Nigeria.

For Mr. El Murtada, none of the African governments has yet understood the need for a policy of safety and health whose advantages will be realized only in the middle or long term. "They give priority to other questions and ARLAC must continue to make them increasingly aware of the problem."

This is one of the reasons why ARLAC has just created a modern library attached to the ILO's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Center (CIS) as well as to the ILO library in Geneva and accessible by computer to member countries. "In this way, we also hope to ensure co-ordination of research programs and formulation of employment policies in Africa", Mr. El Murtada states. ⌟

Ram Etwareea
Journalist, InfoSud



Jacques Maillard

rate: enforcing respect for the rules of safety

AROUND THE CONTINENTS

▲ AIDING THE CHANGE-OVER: The absence of effective employers' organizations to meet the challenges of the transition process from centrally planned to market economies is one of the major problems of Eastern and Central Europe. With the financial support of the Dutch and German governments, at the beginning of this year the ILO launched two projects in cooperation with West European employers' associations to strengthen their counterparts in Eastern Europe and foster effective private sector development. The projects will identify priority areas for action and create a flexible network for exchange of information and know-how with Western countries.

▲ COMBATING POVERTY: Tunisia can claim a spectacular reduction of poverty in its population from 38.5 per cent in 1975 to 20.6 per cent in 1990. Last year the ILO and the UNDP were asked to carry out a mission to the country to design a systematic anti-poverty strategy that would help the remaining poor. In response, the organizations suggest a shift from the "hand-out" approach, where the poor depend on the state, in favor of one that places them in the mainstream of economic and social life. This orientation also takes account of regional differences and identifies vulnerable target groups, especially youth, the unemployed and women. Women's unemployment increased from 11 per cent in 1984 to 20.9 per cent in 1989.

▲ SOCIAL PROGRESS: Thousands of inhabitants of Oman suffer from various forms and degrees of physical and mental disability. In most cases disability has serious social and economic consequences. Instead of implementing a separate project, the ILO and the Sultanate of Oman decided to include a vocational rehabilitation component in a social development program started in 1987. Community development, women's and children's affairs, vocational training in rural areas and vocational rehabilitation thus became much more closely interrelated. By 1991, the Oman Vocational Rehabilitation Center was training and placing more than 50 disabled persons every two years.

▲ PROMOTION OF EQUALITY: In 1990 the poverty threshold in the Philippines was estimated to be such that the income of at least two daily wage-earners was necessary for a family of six to live above the poverty level. This situation forces married women to work in order to increase family income. With the financial support of the Netherlands an ILO pilot project was designed in 1989 to train women and girls in male-dominated trades. Gaining skills for non-traditional women's occupations has helped them to compete in a difficult labor market saturated by the return of migrant workers after the Gulf war. The project has also created public awareness of discrimination against women in training and employment.

▲ TOURISM AND THE HOTEL INDUSTRY: In ten Latin American countries national tripartite committees are being created to give new impulse to vocational training in these sectors, always a potential source for employment and foreign exchange. As part of an ILO project financed by the Spanish Government, representatives of the public sector, employers and trade unions will work together to elaborate a training policy promoting maximal development of the possibilities for tourism in the region. Another object is to improve working conditions, with particular attention to the situation for women, in order to retain qualified personnel in the sectors.

Unions fear dangers of youth unemployment

Martin Ferguson*

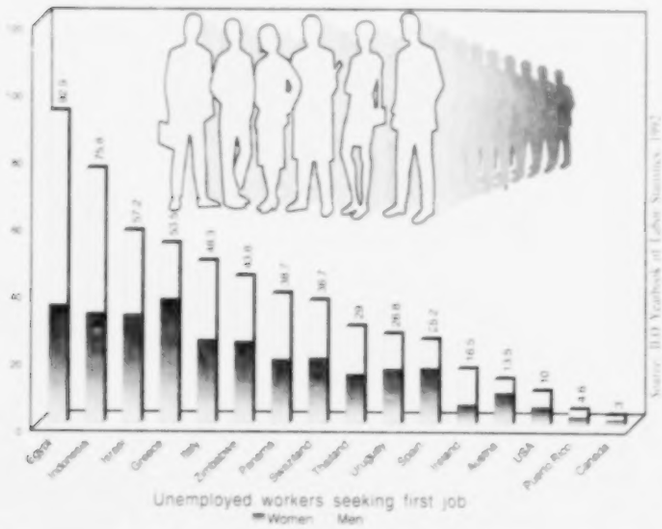
All over the world young people looking for their first jobs are faced with the relentless increase of unemployment. The usual solutions proposed are largely cosmetic, Martin Ferguson argues here. The real remedy is to change economic policies and give priority to the basic human needs.

Industrialized and developing countries alike are experiencing rates of joblessness not seen since the 1930s, with little sign of improvement in the near future. Youth unemployment is particularly alarming. The social consequences of this great waste of human potential are felt increasingly as rates of crime and drug abuse grow, and young people become more and more frustrated by not being able fully to participate in society.

In many developing countries the majority of young people see little or no prospect of regular work in the formal sector, so many thousands leave to seek better opportunities in the industrialized economies. The industrialized countries themselves cannot accommodate such numbers in their generally weak economies, so that many immigrants end up unemployed or working in a shadowy underground of casual labor, without social protection, and vulnerable to the alarming rise in racism and xenophobia (hatred of foreigners) now increasingly fomented by extremist political tendencies.

While the social impact of unemployment is manifested in ways which can be identified and measured, the economic cost of so many millions of young people being excluded from productive economic activity is much harder to measure, but will certainly be with us for many years to come.

Percentage of unemployed workers seeking first job compared to total unemployed of selected countries



The principal cause for the extent of the problem can be traced to the obsession of many if not most governments with narrow monetarist policies, in which beating inflation is the centerpiece of economic theory and employment is seen as secondary. The world is paying a heavy price indeed for the assumption that if certain financial criteria are met, everything else will fall into place.

What are the solutions?

One approach advocated as a solution to youth unemployment is further to reduce the relative cost of employing young people, particularly through lowering or holding down their wages. Experience has shown, however, that the results of this policy are at best marginal, involving substitution rather than creation of significant numbers of new jobs, and short-term rather than permanent employment. Nevertheless, unions are reporting continued efforts by various governments to cut young workers' wages and benefits and restrict unions from freely bargaining on their behalf. But young workers deserve the right to full application of the rights accorded under ILO conventions.

Many governments have introduced special programs to promote integration of young people into the employed labor force, through short-term employment schemes, initiatives on vocational training, and activities to promote growth of small business and co-operatives. Such schemes certainly have a place in any comprehensive attempt to address youth unemployment; they cannot solve the problem by themselves, however.

Youth unemployment cannot be treated separately from the problem of unemployment in general. Only when solutions to the overall world economic recession are implemented can we expect to guarantee a reasonable prospect of economic security to young people. To

Jacques Maillard

reverse the general trend towards higher unemployment, governments must make the quest for full employment a central objective of economic policy and turn from relying on a narrow set of financial indicators as the only real determinant of government action.

Aiming at full employment

As the tripartite United Nations institution, the ILO can play a significant role in supporting a return by governments to full-employment policies. The international financial institutions need to take account of the ILO's standards and wide experience on employment matters in their agreements with countries undergoing structural adjustment programs, and put people at the center of economic restructuring. The governments of industrialized countries must also bear in mind that long-term answers to their problems cannot be found while living standards and purchasing power in developing countries continue to decline. Unemployment is a global problem, requiring global attention.

At national level, genuine tripartite consultation on national macro-economic strategy should form a key element in government efforts to institute the goal of full employment as a key objective of economic policy. The ILO is well placed to assist governments to follow this course, particularly by ensuring that labor ministries are not sidelined in the policy-development process, by promoting policies for sustained employment growth, and by making available advice and information on growth-oriented economic strategies.

Strict limitations on government expenditure have placed severe pressure on vocational training budgets, a situation compounded by reductions in private sector training expenditure. This erosion of the skills base will in itself hamper prospects for economic recovery and deserves urgent attention. Even in times of crisis, training remains an indispensable investment in the future. Governments and employers alike should therefore do their utmost to maintain and increase funding for education and training programs, including levies on employers who do not meet minimum standards for provision of training. The ILO can play a useful role in advising governments on effective ways to promote tripartite agreements on funding of training and to improve planning to match current training programs with future needs.

While specific initiatives to alleviate youth employment do have a place, lasting solutions will only be found through changes in macro-economic policy by individual governments as part of a coordinated global program for recovery. If urgent measures are not taken towards this end, unemployment will continue to grow, forcing governments to contemplate competitive reductions in wages and workers' rights in order to attract investment. This will surely place great pressure on the universal application of ILO standards and as such represents one of the major challenges for the ILO and the world community into the next century. ⌟

*President, Australian Council of Trade Unions. Spokesman for the Workers' Group of the Employment Committee of the ILO Governing Body.

AGENDA OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE

The 80th Session of the International Labor Conference will take place in Geneva from 1 to 22 June 1993. In addition to the issue of part-time work *(see pp. 12-14)*, it will examine, among other topics:

- ***Development of social security and social protection schemes* in member States and the role the ILO can play in helping to make these schemes more efficient. The matter is dealt with in the Report of the Director-General and will be debated in plenary session. Guidelines both for ILO member States and for the activities of the Office should result from the discussion.**
- ***Prevention of major industrial accidents*: the Conference has before it proposals on this subject aimed at the adoption of new standards in the form of a Convention and a Recommendation.**
- ***The role of the ILO in technical cooperation*: This issue will be dealt with in a general discussion which should set the overall tone of the program during the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.**

In addition to regular items relating to the application of ILO standards and discussion of the special report on action against apartheid in South Africa, the agenda also includes consideration and adoption of the budget for 1994-95 and the election of members of the ILO Governing Body for a three-year period.

More flexible training

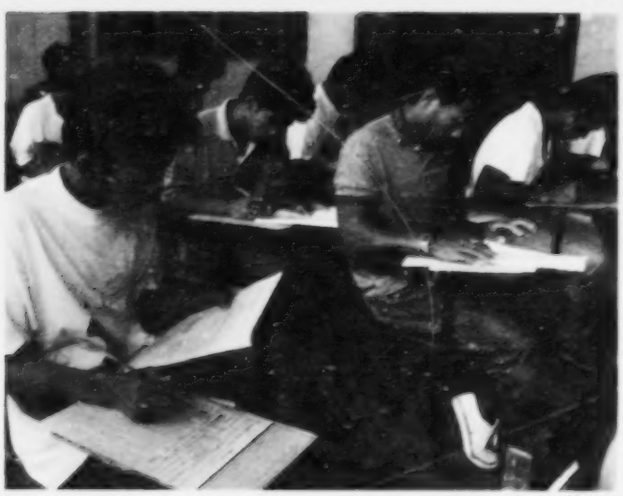
Jacques Monat

The problem of unemployment – particularly youth unemployment, discussed in the preceding pages – inevitably brings up that of training. Making the talent offered on the employment market correspond to the needs of constantly changing economies seems insoluble. Jacques Monat, former official of the ILO and its International Institute for Labor Studies, proposes several ideas for further reflection.

Traditionally, when planning the construction or extension of schools and training centers, as well as the training of teachers and instructors, attempts were made to forecast future vacancies, and middle and long-term employment in particular.

Today this is more and more difficult. Already a number of developing countries, which devote as much as a quarter of their national budget to education, can no longer attempt to make forecasts, because of structural adjustments under way.

The industrialized countries, for their part, must not only adapt to ever-changing technology, but also witness the reduction of mass production lines, with new or individual models being continually introduced to satisfy the tastes or needs of customers. Tight, "just-in-time" flow production methods, with a minimum of stocks, are increasingly common, with the result that a system of "uncertainty management" has now been achieved.



Jacques Maillard

This phenomenon is increased by structural adjustment after mergers, closures of firms or reduction in the number of personnel, all of which involve redeployment of the labor force. To this can be added, more than ever before, changes in job orientation, since initial preferences cannot always be satisfied, and many young people continue to be guided by a process of trial and error.

In such conditions vocational training becomes a major element in adaptation, re-training and labor flexibility. This training never stops being diversified, from the initial stages right up to refresher courses for executives, as well as training in enterprise creation and the complete range of training, updating and reorientation courses. At the same time, the policies, structures and programs in this area should become more and more flexible, in order to limit as much as possible the coexistence of job offers which cannot be filled on the one hand, and high employment on the other.

It is not surprising to note the increasing interest in the system of alternation of apprenticeship and training, which is more realistic and closer to the true needs of the employment market. This "dual" apprenticeship system, which is so widespread in Germany, has resulted in a lower rate of youth unemployment than elsewhere, though it is true that in nearly all the industrialized countries apprenticeships are carried out largely in the informal sector, and frequently too many apprentices are recruited for too-long periods, mainly to supply a cheap workforce.

The experience of the ILO shows that there is more than one possibility for improvement: legislative and regulative measures to set up appropriate forms of social protection, access to funding and credit, technical improvements, development aid for groups of artisans having a central workshop where they can carry on activities which they cannot do at home to improve their skills, and so on. It should be noted in this context that training alone is not sufficient for micro-enterprises and independent workers, and that a number of supporting measures, such as accounting facilities, and legal and fiscal advice centers, or leave granted for the creation of enterprises, are also necessary.

Finally, training by modules, already well known, should be developed considerably, as well as distance teaching, including its more traditional form by correspondence.

It is clear then that, in many ways, the active collaboration of training specialists with those who handle employment is highly advisable and can prove particularly successful.

This page is open to all participants and observers within the world of work who wish to express a personal point of view on any subject of interest to the ILO.

Media shelf

In print

■ **World Labor Report, 1993.** Vol. 6. *ISBN 92-2-108007-2; ISSN 0255-5514. 22.50 Swiss francs.*

This is the second in a new annual series of the *World Labor Report*.

In addition to the overall situation of employment in the world *(see article, page 14)*, the 1993 Report focuses on forced labor, trade unions, social protection in developing countries and stress at work.

The chapter on forced labor finds that if traditional forms of forced labor such as slavery have all but disappeared, debt bondage still involves many millions of workers, mainly in South Asia and in some Latin American countries.

The chapter on trade unions reviews efforts of adaptation to a fast-changing economic – and political – environment by workers' organizations around the world.

In the developing countries the brunt of the economic adjustment burden has fallen on family and community systems of support. The main future task, the Report says, is to provide as full a basic coverage as possible for the population as a whole.

■ **International Labor Review.** *ISSN 0020-7780. Annual subscription (1993) 75 Sw. frs., £30 or $60; prices of single issues on request.*

The latest issue of the ILR examines a number of topical and sometimes controversial issues: why are national approaches to the legal prohibition of sexual harassment at work so different, and which are most effective? Why does the effect of having children on women's lifetime earnings vary so greatly between countries? What is the place of collective bargaining in the European social dialog? How does labor law specifically affect small and medium-sized enterprises around the world? Also, some counter-intuitive lessons from a project to help children working on a garbage dump, and how social security protects (or doesn't) the atypical worker. The annual chronological, author and country index completes the issue *(also published in French and – selections only – in Spanish.)*

■ **Training for older people: A handbook,** by P.C. Plett and B.T. Lester. 1991. *ISBN 92-2-107294-0. 25 Sw. frs.; $20; £11.*

This handbook will be useful for trainers and training providers concerned with older people, local or regional authorities, counselling and employment agencies and other organizations setting up training programs for older people.

For trainers who have no experience of working with adults, let alone older adults, it gives guidelines which are particularly useful. The largest section, on planning and organizing training programs, goes into great detail and would be particularly helpful to any trainer who had not had experience of this age group. An ideal starting-point for those newly moving into work with adults, be it non-vocational or vocational training, and not just with those in the old age range.

The handbook also provides information on the overall environment for older workers, and on such elements as the implications of training, program design and implementation, marketing the skills and experience of older workers, staffing, costs and the evaluation of results. *(Also published by the ILO in Spanish.)*

Further reading on migration for employment

■ **International migration in Africa: legal and administrative aspects,** by Sergio Ricca. 1989. *ISBN 92-2-106502-3. 37.50 Sw. frs.; $30; £16.50.*

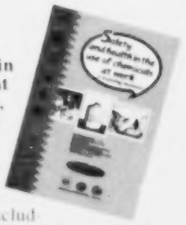
A well-written and informed document concerning a critical aspect of life in contemporary Africa: the causes and pain of migrant life. Using an extensive data base, a clear and precise research methodology and a logical presentation, the author proposes incisive and practical solutions to the legal and administrative problems of migration. The analysis of the problems of migration in Africa is the result of many years of work on the economic and political dilemma of Africa and Latin countries.

■ **The unfinished story: Turkish labor migration to Western Europe,** with special reference to the Federal Republic of Germany, by Philip L. Martin. 1991. *ISBN 92-2-107292-4. 25 Sw. frs.; $20; £11.*

This highly readable account traces the movement of Turkish migrants to European Community countries over the last 30 years. Drawing on both published research and on the testimonies of key informants, it examines the economic and social impacts on Turkey and the Federal Republic of Germany, and asks whether there might be further large-scale migration if Turkey became a member of the EC. *(Also published by the ILO in Turkish.)*

■ **MIES Bulletin.** No 2/1992. ILO, Geneva. *ISSN 1014-8809.*

Published twice yearly as part of the Mediterranean Information Exchange System (MIES), this publication provides information allowing for regular observation and analysis of the development of migratory movements between Mediterranean countries. Explanatory texts are presented in French and English in parallel columns.



■ **Safety and health in the use of chemicals at work: a training manual,** by Abu Bakar Che Man and David Gold. *ISBN 92-2-106470-0. Sw. fr. 17.50.*

This training manual addresses all aspects of dealing with chemicals including production, storage, use, transport and disposal. It provides an approach to problems and solutions concerning safety and health in the use of chemicals at work. Workers and their representatives will find information that will help them understand how chemicals can affect them and what measures can be taken to afford protection. Information is also provided on preventing fires and explosions.

On film

● **FILM** *Garimpeiros*, 25 minutes, 1989.

Along the Madeira river on the frontier between Brazil and Bolivia, some 30,000 *garimpeiros* (gold hunters) are involved in one of the most difficult jobs in the world: underwater gold extraction. More than 2,000 died in accidents over a two-year period. In addition, the mercury amalgam used by *garimpeiros* to separate gold from the mud is held by many Brazilian and international environmental organizations to be the main cause of contamination of the rivers of the region.

How can both the workers' health and the ecological balance of the Amazonian rivers be protected? The film suggests answers based on experience acquired during an ILO technical co-operation project.

Miguel Schapira

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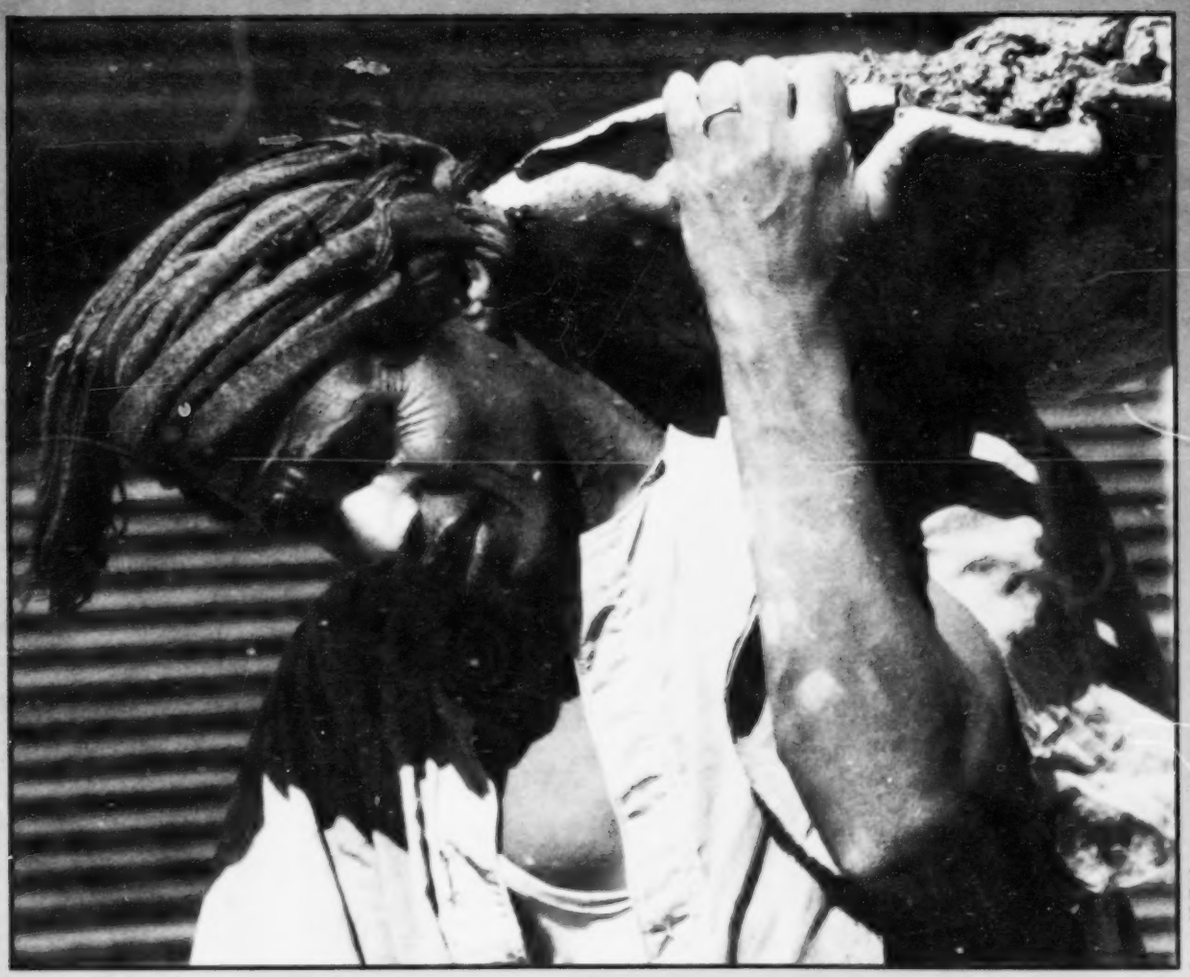

Jacques Maitland

"No worker shall be required or permitted to engage in the manual transport of a load which, by reason of its weight, is likely to jeopardise his health or safety."

(ILO Convention No. 127, 1967)

Created in 1919, the International Labor Organization (ILO) brings together governments, employers and workers of its 162 member States in common action to improve social protection and conditions of life and work throughout the world. The International Labor Office, in Geneva, is the permanent Secretariat of the Organization.